(b) if so, the details thereof, and whether it is not failure of Government policy;

(c) whether capitalists are openly flouting Central Government's order for Sugarcane Control, Sugarcane Purchase and Marketing Act of State Government; and

(d) if so, the details thereof, and the steps taken by Government so far against those capitalists?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS) : (a) and (b) The lower than anticipated sugar production in 2008-09 sugar season and the estimated low production of sugar in the current sugar season has led to increase in sugar prices since the beginning of 2009. The Central Government fixes the Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) of sugarcane for each sugar season based on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and prices (CACP) taking into account various factors including the price at which sugar produced from sugarcane is sold by producers of sugar. However, some sugarcane producing States fix their State Advised/Agreed price (SAP) of sugarcane higher than the SMP announced by the Central Government.

(c) and (d) Under the Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966 as amended from time to time, the powers for enforcing the provisions relating to payment of the cane price dues of cane growers by the sugar mills are delegated and vested with the State Governments concerned who have the necessary field organizations.

Unaffordable price hike for common man

†1736. SHRI KRISHAN LAL BALMIKI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that prices of foodgrains have become unaffordable for the common man;

(b) if so, the reasons for Government's inability to control it; and

(c) whether the rise in prices will be controlled soon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS) : (a) There has been an increase in prices of foodgrain items such as cereals, pulses and sugar. The Government has taken steps to protect poor sections of society through Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and Antodaya Anna Yojna (AAY). Under the TPDS, wheat, rice, coarse grains and kerosene are allocated to State Governments/UTs for distribution through the Fair Price Shops. The off take of wheat and rice under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) has been going up. For TPDS, wheat and rice off take have gone up from 296.52 lakh tonnes in 2004-05 to 348.45 lakh tonnes in 2008-09. During the period 2009-10 (up to August 2009), 183.07 lakh tonnes of wheat and rice has been allocated under TPDS.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

The Central Issue Price for rice and wheat has not been revised since 2002. For wheat it remains at Rs. 4.15 per kg for BPL and Rs. 2 per kg for AAY. For rice, it is Rs. 5.65 per kg for BPL and Rs. 3 per kg for AAY.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Prices are determined by the market forces of demand and supply side factors. Availability of items such as pulses, sugar and edible oils is being enhanced in the short term by encouraging their imports. In the medium and long term focus is on agricultural growth.

Introduction of universalized PDS system

1737. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that universalized PDS was in vogue previously;

(b) if so, the reasons for its withdrawal;

(c) whether the universalized PDS will again come into force;

(d) if so, by when; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS) : (a) and (b) Prior to June 1997, Public Distribution System (PDS) was a general entitlement Scheme for all consumers without any specific target. With a view to streamline the PDS as well as to improve its reach in the hilly, tribal, inaccessible and priority areas, a variant of PDS called Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS) was also under implementation from June, 1992, in 1775 blocks.

With a view to specifically target poor sections of society for distribution of subsidized foodgrains (rice, wheat and coarse grains) and sugar, Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) was launched in June, 1997.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. There is no proposal before Government to make TPDS universal in coverage.

(e) If the universal PDS as it existed prior to 1997 is to be restored, then even if allocations are made for 18.04 crore households (this number of households was as per estimated population by Registrar General of India as on 1st March, 2000), the total annual requirement of rice and wheat at the scale of 35 kg. per household per month would be 76 million tons. Further, if the total ration cards issued by the State and UT Governments up to 31.10.2009 are considered, this number is 24.23 crores. At the scale of 35 kg. foodgrains per household per month, the actual requirement of these households would be around 102 million tons of wheat and rice per annum.